

Educator Preparation Program CEAR Education Project Alignment Reflection & Analysis Process

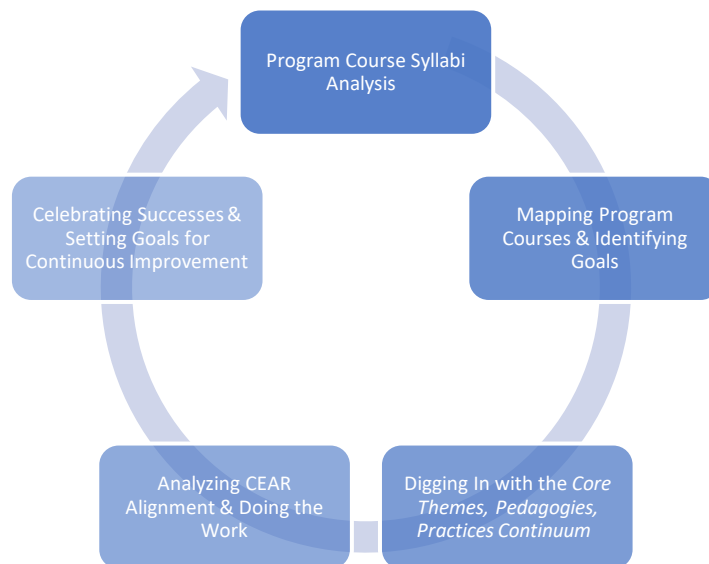
Overall Description:

The Rutgers Graduate School of Education's (GSE) mission is to advance equity and excellence in education by addressing the "cognitive, social, organizational, cultural, linguistic, developmental, and policy dimensions of education" (cite). In keeping with this mission, the Community Engaged and Anti-Racist (CEAR) Education Project was designed to develop a network of faculty, educators and community-based organization (CBO) fellows with opportunities to connect, grow, support one another, and share experiences and curricular materials, identify community-engaged anti-racist principles and practices for pedagogy and curriculum development, and develop and disseminate Kindergarten-5th grade community-engaged anti-racist curricular materials. GSE faculty fellows, teachers (educator fellows) from the Community School Partnership Network (CSPN) districts, and members of CBOs from three local communities, united with the shared, overarching goal of developing and/or increasing our understanding of how to be community engaged and anti-racist. Through this work, the CEAR community engaged in regular, collaborative professional development, developed CEAR shared norms, principles, and practices, and used our new professional knowledge and understanding to inform curricula development and instructional improvement across elementary and university programs.

In addition, the GSE Faculty Fellows from the Elementary and Language Education Programs conducted an Educator Preparation Program CEAR Project Reflection and Analysis process in which we reviewed the programs through the lens of the CEAR Principles and Practices. We then considered how to adapt our programs to better align with the CEAR Principles and Practices and developed and mapped out key activities and experiences across the programs.

In what follows, we offer a description of the process conducted by our Faculty Fellows and a set of procedures and tools that might be useful to other teacher preparation programs to assess alignment with CEAR Principles and Practices and overall program coherence.

1. [Program Course Syllabi Analysis](#)
2. [Mapping Program Courses & Identifying Goals](#)
3. [Digging In with the Core Themes, Pedagogies, Practices Continuum](#)
4. [Analyzing CEAR Alignment & Doing the Work](#)
5. [Celebrating Successes & Setting Goals for Continuous Improvement](#)



Program Course Syllabi Analysis

Description: In the first stage of the analysis and reflection process, faculty conducted a review of program course syllabi. For this analysis, faculty fellows with experience teaching the courses assigned evaluated their syllabi for alignment with CEAR Principles noting the level of depth at which they were addressed (i.e. introduced, practiced with peers in class, practiced with P-12 students in clinical work, or reviewed assuming students had previous exposure). The syllabi were also evaluated for CEAR Practices, and key readings, resources, and assignments deemed CEAR-related. Lastly, potential connections to other courses and general scaffolds and student supports offered in the courses were also identified in this stage.

Preparation/Independent Work:

- Collect the most updated program syllabi.
- Identify program faculty who are knowledgeable in and experienced with teaching teacher preparation program courses (have experience teaching the same course multiple times).
- Use the CEAR Shared Core Beliefs & Norms and CEAR Principles & Practices documents to reflect on and analyze program course resources, assignments, and course activities for CEAR alignment. Use the [Syllabus CEAR Alignment Tool](#) to record notes in preparation for the Syllabus Analysis Meeting.

- Share the completed Syllabus CEAR Alignment Tools in an easily accessible virtual space with meeting participants.

Collaborative Processing:

Note: This process is best conducted with a group of 3-6 members. If the group exceeds this amount, consider splitting into two groups and then convening to share discussion results.

1. Invite participants to review the Syllabus CEAR Alignment Tool completed by another participant. Ideally, assign participants a course they do not routinely teach. Prompt them to consider the following as they review:
 - *What do you learn from reviewing the completed Syllabus CEAR Alignment Tool?*
 - *What questions come up for you as you review the completed Syllabus CEAR Alignment Tool?*
2. In a round, request participants share one thing they learned and a question that came up from reviewing the completed Syllabus CEAR Alignment Tool. Make note of what is shared.
3. Elicit ideas for how to categorize what was shared from the syllabus review (i.e. trends, big ideas, concerns, etc.). Use these categories to inform your goal setting in the next stage of the CEAR Alignment Reflection & Analysis Process.

Mapping Program Courses and Identifying Goals

Description: Following the analysis of all program courses, Faculty Fellows sequentially mapped the courses overall alignment to the CEAR Principles. In our review, Fellows learned across course syllabi that it appeared as though CEAR Principles were, in fact, being practiced. However, this led to several in-depth discussions regarding *how* they were being practiced and the different ways in which they were being enacted by the faculty. For example, for faculty who taught multiple courses, the connections between courses in the program were easier to make; however, for those who specialized in one area or course, it was harder to understand how a core pedagogy is developed over time throughout the program. Rich discussions about CEAR Principles and how they aligned with core themes, pedagogies, and practices led to the development of two overarching questions and goals that would guide our work.

Preparation/Independent Work:

- Collect completed Syllabus CEAR Alignment Tools in an easily accessible virtual space.
- Using the [EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map Template](#), arrange program courses, sequentially, to mirror how students experience their teacher preparation. Complete

the dropdown menu options designating the level at which each CEAR Principle is addressed in each course.

- Program faculty, who are knowledgeable in and experienced with teaching teacher preparation program courses (have experience teaching the same course multiple times), identify at least one CEAR-aligned course activity to add to the EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map.

Collaborative Processing:

Note: This process is best conducted with a group of 3-6 members. If the group exceeds this amount, consider splitting into two groups and then convening to share discussion results.

1. Revisit the categories of ideas identified in the first collaborative processing meeting. Invite participants to consider those categories and ideas as they review EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map. Prompt them to consider the following as they review:
 - *Which CEAR Principles does the program highlight most?*
 - *In which phases of the program are CEAR Principles highlighted?*
 - *Which CEAR Principles should be focused on more?*
 - *In which phases of the program, and in which courses, should CEAR work be increased and amplified?*
2. In separate rounds, prompt participants to respond to the questions above. Create a list in which CEAR Principles are identified as *addressed* and *aspirational*.
3. Look more closely at the ways in which the CEAR Principles identified as “addressed” are being enacted in the program using the examples offered in the EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map. Identify one activity for the whole group, or break off into pairs to discuss the activities in more depth. Prompt participants to offer positive feedback, questions, and constructive comments about the activities shared, specifically regarding their CEAR alignment. Consider using the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - *How was this activity developed? Was it intentionally created to be CEAR-focused?*
 - *How are students prepared to engage in this work?*
 - *What resources, tools, or strategies are used to facilitate this work?*
 - *How is this work informed by the coursework conducted in the program prior?*
 - *How does this work inform future coursework?*
 - *In what ways do students receive feedback regarding how this work is CEAR aligned?*
 - *How does this inform the work conducted with P-12 learners?*
 - *How could this activity be modified to align with a second CEAR Principle?*

- *Are there core principles, pedagogies, practices, etc. that should be added to the map given something this activity highlights?*
4. If the group split during step 4, reconvene to highlight “take away” points. Allow time for each pair to share, using these prompts: *What, from your discussion, helped to inform your understanding of the CEAR Principles and/or how they are enacted in practice?*
 5. Revisit the questions posed at the start of the collaborative process (see Step 1 above) and the CEAR Principles identified as *aspirational*. Identify program improvement goals for increasing program coherence in alignment with CEAR Principles & Practices.

Digging In with the [Core Themes, Pedagogies, Practices Continuum](#)

Description: While evaluating the syllabi for level of depth at which the themes, pedagogies, and practices were addressed (i.e. introduced, practiced with peers in class, practiced with P-8 students in clinical work, or reviewed assuming students had previous exposure) we struggled to find a common language for discussing our work. What did it truly mean to *introduce* a core pedagogy or CEAR Principle? How did we know if it was being *introduced* or *reviewed* given some faculty only taught one program course? To address this challenge, we created the [Core Themes, Pedagogies, Practices Continuum](#) as a way for us to talk about the depth of knowledge, understanding, and application in practice within the courses.

With syllabi analyzed, and themes and pedagogies identified, the continuum served as a guide to discuss depth of understanding and application of practice. Faculty fellows spent collaborative processing session sequentially mapping out the core themes, pedagogies, and practices across courses in the way students take the courses in the program. Best practices used to enact the themes and practices were described and the level of practice on the continuum were identified. This mapping document afforded fellows the opportunity to evaluate multiple program considerations: 1) methods for addressing core themes and pedagogies within individual courses; 2) methods for addressing core themes and pedagogies across courses; 3) both shared and disparate practices for addressing core themes and pedagogies; and 4) gaps in addressing core themes and pedagogies.

Preparation/Independent Work:

- Program faculty, who are knowledgeable in and experienced with teaching teacher preparation program courses (have experience teaching the same course multiple times), use the [Core Themes, Pedagogies, Practices Continuum](#) to evaluate the courses on the EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map using the dropdown menu.
- Identify as many CEAR-aligned course activities and assignments as are implemented in the course to add to the EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map.

Collaborative Processing:

1. Revisit the program improvement goals identified in the last collaborative processing meeting. Allow participants the opportunity to voice questions or concerns (i.e. language used, ideas to add, modifications to make, etc.) regarding the goals after having had time to think about them.
2. Offer time for participants to independently (silently) review the activities added by peers on the EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map. Prompt them to consider, and make note of the following as they review:
 - *What methods are/should be used to address CEAR Principles, core themes, and pedagogies within individual courses?*
 - *What methods are/should be used to address CEAR Principles, core themes, and pedagogies across courses?*
 - *What are shared practices for addressing CEAR Principles, core themes, and pedagogies?*
 - *What are disparate practices for addressing CEAR Principles, core themes, and pedagogies?*
3. Allow participants space to pose clarifying questions about the coursework shared on the EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map.
4. Using a collaborative document, request participants anonymously respond to the questions posed in Step 2.
5. Lastly, on a co-constructed document or survey, invite participants to identify how this analysis informs both work with program improvement goals and individual faculty goal setting. (The results of these responses should be used to facilitate the following work session.) Ask:
 - *What aspects of CEAR work are being done effectively throughout our program? What should we continue to amplify in our preparation of future educators?*
 - *What actionable steps can be taken to address gaps in CEAR Principles, core themes, and pedagogies?*
 - *What are our collective roles in this work?*
 - *What are our individual roles in this work?*
 - *Whose support is needed to conduct and sustain this work?*

Analyzing CEAR Alignment & Doing the Work

Description: The EPP Course CEAR Curriculum Map and *Core Themes, Pedagogies, Practices Continuum* documents were used as tools to consider when and at what levels of

depth CEAR work is enacted in practice. It has also created some discussions about how we address concepts differently as educators, researchers, and professionals.

For example, using the curriculum mapping document, the Elementary Education Program faculty identified five core themes, pedagogies, and practices addressed consistently across courses throughout the program. We also identified one main area of deficit upon which future CEAR work is now focused. It was also discovered one principle was highly focused on only in the final semester of the program, after full-time student teaching, instead of throughout the program. Thus, both conceptual and developmental considerations were made because of this reflection and analysis process.

Preparation/Independent Work:

- Review the ideas from the closure discussion in the last collaborative processing meeting. Identify one area you can continue to highlight in your work and one actionable step you can take to address gaps in CEAR Principles, core themes, and pedagogies in your role. Create a plan for addressing the step identified.

Collaborative Processing:

1. Revisit the program improvement goals identified in the second collaborative processing meeting and the ideas from the closure discussion in the last collaborative processing meeting. Then, in a round, prompt participants to share one idea about what they have identified they could continue to do to amplify the effective practices highlighted in the last collaborative processing meeting. (This could also be captured on an anonymously shared document to save time.)
2. Next, using the ideas from the closure discussion in the last collaborative processing meeting, invite participants to identify issues to address gaps in CEAR work that could be taken up collaboratively. Use the following questions to prioritize work:
 - *What are our most pressing issues (i.e., those that most often affect our marginalized populations, those that affect the most stakeholders, etc.)?*
 - *Which issues are most relevant to the work we are trying to accomplish in our teacher preparation program (revisit EPP mission/vision to align this work with broader goals)?*
 - *Which issues can we address given the knowledge, expertise, and roles of the group members (what is attainable/reasonable)?*
 - *Which are the issues in which we might be able to make measurable improvements?*
3. Either as a whole group, or in small groups, determine what learning resources, supports, and strategies you will need to address the identified issues. Consider both the professional expertise and limitations of the group members and in which areas of

knowledge and understanding additional guidance and support may be needed. Identify other stakeholders who may be interested, or need to be included, in this work for it to be effective. Establish a realistic timeline, with both short- and long-term progress checks.

4. Once your plan is established, implement the plan and maintain regularly scheduled meetings with the group who began this work together to continually evaluate your progress in alignment with your initial goals.

[Celebrating Successes & Setting Goals for Continuous Improvement](#)

Description: In our final meeting, faculty fellows met to share our progress. Two programs met to present an overview and the outcomes of our collaborative processing meetings. During these presentations, we also shared next steps for program development. These included sustainable and strategic methods for engaging in both continual program evaluation to ensure there is coherence across courses and consistent efforts to deepen our CEAR work within our individual courses and clinical work with our partnership schools. We also considered the need for inquiry into our programs so we can document and evaluate the influence of the CEAR-focused pedagogy.